NATIONAL INTEGRATED BALLISTIC INFORMATION NETWORK PROGRAM

In the area of firearms enforcement, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) Strategic Plan is to reduce gun violence and fairly and effectively regulate the legitimate firearms industry. ATF's primary targets are suspects who illegally use firearms and/or supply guns to criminals or children. One tool aiding ATF in this endeavor is the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Program.

This program was developed to work in concert with all of ATF's firearms enforcement initiatives. With the NIBIN Program, ATF has successfully integrated its expertise in the regulation of the firearms industry and the effective enforcement of the Federal firearms laws with technological advances in the forensic ballistics examination field. This unique program uses all of the resources that ATF has to offer in working with our law enforcement counterparts to reduce firearms violence.

As each fingerprint is different, a firearm leaves unique, identifiable characteristics on expelled ammunition. ATF's NIBIN Program employs the Integrated Ballistics Identification System to compare images of ballistic evidence (projectiles and cartridge casings) obtained from crime scenes and recovered firearms. As new images are entered, the system searches the existing data base for possible matches that must be confirmed by a firearms examiner. As a result, this system has amassed a large ballistics image data base filled with crime gun data from all over the country from which Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies may obtain intelligence information.

With this program, ATF has created a national resource that enables participating law enforcement agencies to store shooting-related data and test-fire exemplars from recovered firearms in one common system capable of performing comparisons and producing probable matches. Also ATF has developed a mechanism to serve as a repository for all crime guns that parallels the Automated Fingerprint Analysis System maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.   Automated ballistics technology is one more weapon in the arsenal of resources that ATF maintains to assist our partners.

IBIS is a proven intelligence tool that can assist in the identification of leads that may not have previously been available; however, the ultimate success of this program rests with criminal investigators. Since ATF and our partner agencies have been using this technology, we have achieved over 2200 hits.